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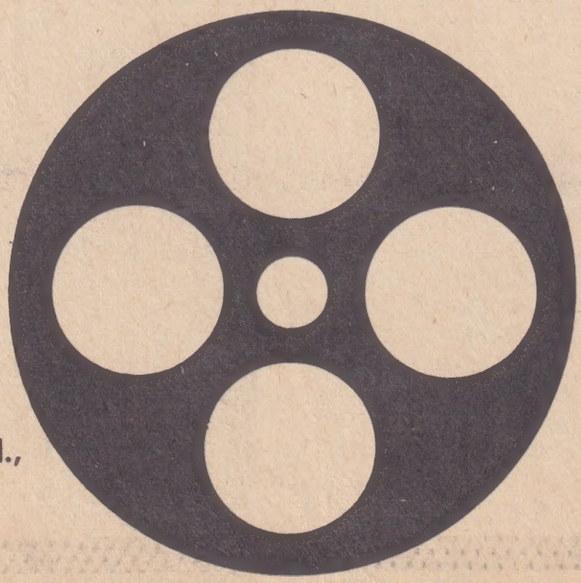

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EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Peter Lebensold * ASSOCIATE EDITORS: Joe Medjuck, Patrick MacFadden * GENERAL EDITOR: Michael Harris * ART DIRECTOR: Terry Mosher * ASSISTANT TO THE PUBLISHER: Nancy McEntyre * EDITORIAL ASSISTANT: Brian Segal * CORRESPONDENTS: *Athens* Donna McDonald; *Boston* Vanessa Farrell; *London* Bill Sherman; *Los Angeles* Tony Reif, Allan Ulrich; *Montreal* Ron Blumer; *New Delhi* Harold Crooks; *New York* Jay Cocks, Bob Cowan, Jon Demme; *Paris* Marc Gervais; *Toronto* Alan Collins, Clive Denton, Bruce Martin, Moses Znaimer; *at large* John Hofsess, Robert Russel * CIRCULATION MANAGER: Patricia Shannon * ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS: Paul Bannerman, Paul Ennis, Ross Lambert, Julian Lebensold, George Lewinski, Linda Nicholson, Chris Portner, Gerry Ross.

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Re the piece "Black Men or Good Niggers?". Whatever their shortcomings, I think the record of American films about race relations since World War II has been generally a good and a progressive one, and I believe such films have played a much bigger part than is realized in the very apparent change for the better over these years in the attitudes of white people toward Negroes. If one may feel these movies could have been more sophisticated or venturesome, still, half a loaf, etc. and many of them have been sympathetic and constructive. But for the most part the intellectual critics have never given them a bit of credit; I have the impression that regardless of *what* Hollywood did in this field, these people would give them hell.

Miss Sugy's article makes a number of valid points, but she overstates her case and there are some errors of fact, such as the statement that in **A Patch of Blue** "Poitier doesn't even kiss his girlfriend". Indeed they did kiss, once, in this film; and unlike Miss Sugy I got the impression that when the girl was through her schooling the pair would get together again. I did *not* think Poitier's brother (Ivan Dixon) was portrayed as "really rotten and awful". He seemed to be "hip", skeptical and by implication militant in his outlook, but not unsympathetic that I can recall. Re this whole bit about "not getting too close": I wonder what Miss S. is going to think of **Guess Who's Coming to Dinner,** in which the mixed couple not only are seen to kiss but get married at the end? Mind you, I could wish this film were wittier and less cozy and sentimental, but for Hollywood it must be racked up as a breakthrough of sorts.

It seems to me a bit much to characterize ordinary everyday courtesy (which I have encountered everywhere from colored people and not least in New York) as an extension of Uncle-Tom-ism in films. Re the alleged "emphatic unsexiness of black movie actresses", I hope I'm not going back too far, but I'd scarcely use such a term about Lena Horne, Eartha Kitt, Dorothy Dandridge, Diahann Carroll or even Ruby Dee. Then, says Miss S., "black roles are wholly positive; no bad, or even complex black people is the rule". This a few paragraphs after her mention of Brock Peters' role in **The Pawnbroker,** a chilling exponent of evil if ever I saw one! Not to speak of **The Comedians** which is crawling with black dictators and thugs; but admittedly that doesn't take place in America.

Miss S. doesn't mention **The Cool World** which certainly doesn't "ignore the real roots of violence in the ghettos", perhaps because it isn't a Hollywood film. She does cite **One Potato, Two Potato** as a non-Hollywood release in which she finds some virtue. It's true that it sympathetically portrays a married mixed-couple; but script-wise I found this one of the weakest, most unbelievable and downright inept of all "race" pictures. No reason is given for the sudden surly refusal of the husband to receive the visiting white friends with whom they had apparently been on good terms both at work and socially before. Also, the whole story centres around the fact that the wife's child by a former marriage is taken away from them by court order because the step-father is colored — yet though we are told that the little girl "loves her new daddy", there isn't one scene between them in the entire film — and even the "heart-rending" parting scene at the end is played out solely between mother and child, while the Negro step-father (and his parents who live with them, and who would presumably also be fond of the child) all stand off stiffly to the side. Not to speak of the crude, melodramatic treatment of the white father who brought the court procedure. Hollywood in its corniest tear-jerking days would have handled all this with more competence.

In conclusion, Miss S. also fails to mention **Nothing But A Man,** one of the best of all "Negro films", in which not only were troubles with whites handled honestly, but the Negroes had plenty of "problems of their own".

G.G. Patterson,
Toronto

(Catherine Sugy writes: Mr. Patterson is absolutely right; I wouldn't have been convinced by some of "Black Men or Good Niggers?" either, as it appeared in *Take One*. For space reasons or whatever, some of my argumentation ended up victim of the blue pencil. Let me recap: 1. Mr. Patterson quotes the black gangster in **The Pawnbroker** as the exception to my statement that all black Hollywood roles have to be positive. Pre-blue pencil I had written: **"The Pawnbroker** seems, at first glance, an exception. The Harlem gangster there is 'chilling' all right. But that's just the point. He is so handsome and so tall, so powerful, black and unambiguous, that he is a figure of grandeur, an ur-Satan whose younger black criminals tempt, *but do not compare with,* black people."

2.On putative sexiness of black actresses: Pre-blue pencil: "They are either motherly (Vinette Carroll in **Up the Down Staircase),** abortionist **(In the Heat of the Night),** or neat, efficient and severe (the secretary in **Doctor, You've Got to be Kidding,** Diahann Carroll's schoolteacher in **Hurry Sundown)".** Mr. Patterson points to the sexiness of Kitt, Horne and Dandridge. Agreed, but with the exception of the latter's very occasional movie, these are prisoners of the nightclub circuit, in which occupation, sexiness, real or feigned, is *de rigueur.*

3.What about **Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?** What indeed? Agreed, this Poitier kisses, hugs, and marries the white lady. But he is after all, a Nobel Prize winner. The next step, surely, is the Presidency. Anyway, the real groove would have been if he had taken *her* back to the ghetto for black-eyed peas with *his* folks. As it stands, white acceptance of Poitier serves the double function of being able to ignore a black *underclass,* without at the same time being racist.

4.Finally, my major point, I thought, was that a class problem compounded by race remains largely unexplored in the latest movies, whether Hollywood or independent. But Mr. Patterson is right about the Poitier kiss in **A Patch of Blue.** I had quite forgotten it. It was fast. On the cheek. Nice though.)

"Black Men or Good Niggers?" is the kind of article which sets the liberals on edge: precisely because it tells them where they're at. The manipulation of the Black man in white films has reached a rather delicate state: the shift from servant to buddy to accidental Black Knight

has been accomplished: but where to now? Perhaps we will have to have a few more repetitions of Rod Steiger's "Why Vergil, you're just like us!" — so that the up-tight white mind may adjust comfortably to the unthreatening, smiling Black Presence. As long as race is used as a dividing tactic and as a smokescreen to obscure the real issues, I am afraid that Hollywood will not — indeed, cannot — portray Black people in any other manner.

Two other points: First, the level of consciousness revealed in **The Petrified Forest,** when black gangster confronts black chauffeur, is much higher (and funnier) than that in any commercial film of the past ten years where race is either an issue or a studied non-issue.

Secondly, it seems to me that every film in which the Black Presence is acknowledged is really **Birth of a Nation** in disguise — and cleverly reversed as well: it is inconveivable, for instance, that Poitier, the Thurgood Marshall of filmdom, could bring *Katherine Houghton* home for dinner; such a scene would be intolerably offensive to the liberal mind because it would recall that wonderful moment in Griffith's film when the leering savage announces to the Magnolia Maiden: "I'se a colonel now and I wants to marry." In order to deny itself the victim of such a crude and fear-ridden cliche, Hollywood must reverse the whole situation: such a righteous turnabout satisfies two major tenets of the Liberal Creed: when the Black man is shown to be "just like us" (indeed, even 'better'), he then must be 'led' home rather in the manner of a tamed and harmless exotic pet: his essentially neuter nature must be demonstrated again and again.

The road from mindless savage to mindless servant to mindless knight is not so very long a trail after all, though the camouflage has become progressively more sophisticated and crafty.

Carol L. Cardozo
New York

I'm enormously impressed with the quality of many of the articles you're printing. I've gotten more new ideas from them than from any publication since "The Gutenberg Galaxy".

Tony Hodgkinson,
Brookline, Mass.

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SILVIO NARIZZANO

portrait of a filmmaker

by Gene Phillips

Silvio Narizzano was busy late last year, preparing for his trip to the U.S. to make a film about the American frontier called **Blue** when he settled down one afternoon in his London office to talk about his career. Although he is a veteran TV director, this Canadian-born, London-based director won international attention with his film **Georgy Girl,** which was a British entry at the Berlin Festival, and which gained Academy Award nominations for Lynn Redgrave and James Mason. (His first film, **Die, Die, My Darling,** starring Tallulah Bankhead, was released in 1965.)

But Narizzano, a modest man, is used to awards. He was the first non-American TV director to win an Emmy, for his TV production of the off-Broadway version of **War and Peace.** Arthur Miller entrusted him with the first major television production of **Death of a Salesman,** for which he won the 1959 annual award of the Directors Guild of British Television. He won the same award again in 1965, just before turning to film making, for his TV version of six Feydeau farces, which are now in international TV distribution.

It was his work on the French farces that made him realize his taste for farce. Previously he had been known primarily for directing dramas. When there was some concern that the plot of **Georgy Girl** might be too frank, "I decided that, since I enjoyed farce, I would do **Georgy Girl** as a farce." His decision has proved a wise one. "Life doesn't have to be grim", he says. He learned from Feydeau that the same situations that Albee and Miller treat in serious drama can be treated as comedy and still retain a serious point.

This statement is borne out in *Time*'s description of Lynn Redgrave's performance as Georgy: "She seemed at first to be playing the heroine for heehaws, for one of those hopelessly single shoes that plod through life interminably in search of a mate. Yet as the reels went by, the heroine changed slowly from a standard figure of fun to a unique and even sinister individual: a wounded and frightened young woman who wanted love but settled for power — with a husband she could dominate and a baby she could smother-mother."

Narizzano would accept this description of Georgy as agreeing with his own interpretation, except for the word "sinister". There is nothing sinister about Georgy. She is, nevertheless, "self-destructive and has an inferiority complex about being clumsy and over-weight", he explains. "She deliberately makes a fool of herself at the party, for example, out of a sense of self-pity."

"When Lynn Redgrave asked me what the film was about", Narizzano recalls, "I said it is the celebration of a square. At the beginning of the film Georgy, like most girls, wants to follow the pack. She gets an outrageous hair-do because she wants to live up to the popular concept of what a smart young woman should be in the swinging world of mini-skirts and the Beatles. She thinks it is a privilege that Jos and Meredith, a young couple, share her flat", because she is able to share vicariously in what she considers a more romantic and exciting life than she lives.

Georgy is not able to see that Jos is just an ordinary fellow with a second-rate job who "tries to hide this by buying all the props that he thinks will make him as exciting as the Beatles — the Beatle cap, style of suit, etc. But he is only copying, trying to be something and someone he is not. He is a shabby imitation."

It is only when Jos stands by helplessly as Meredith cynically talks of having their new baby adopted that Georgy sees through them both. Georgy begins to assert herself as an individual. She takes the baby and cares for it herself. "The movie Georgy has more spirit than the girl in Margaret Forster's novel", Narizzano says. "I tried to give her an independent spirit as well as a sense of humor."

Still when Jos deserts her after a brief affair, Georgy marries an older man at the end of the film, a millionaire who can provide security for herself and the baby. Some people found this ending somewhat cynical, but Narizzano counters that the novel is essentially "a black comedy, and we couldn't hide this element. It is in the material."

"Even at the end of the film Georgy still has an inability to accept the fact that anyone her own age could love her", so she has settled for a home and a family, and given up her romantic notions of love. Nevertheless, Narizzano believes that the film's ending is basically optimistic. As Georgy goes off on her honeymoon with her new husband *and* the baby, the song on the sound track comments, "You're rich, Georgy Girl." She is rich because she has found a course in life to follow, in

spite of her limitations and inferiority feelings. "No one gets everything in life the way they want it", Narizzano comments. "We all have to face compromise and disappointment. Instead of continuing to feel sorry for herself, Georgy has *done* something."

One critic described Georgy as a girl who has "very sound and active natural instincts", but who doesn't really understand completely why she does things. "And a lot of good is done in this world", Narizzano concludes, "by people who don't understand their own motives."

"I want to make films about people who do not fit into the routine pattern of existence that the rest of us know", Narizzano remarks. "I want to deal with different human relationships and explore the problems that these relationships cause, without trying to solve them."

For instance, in the love scenes in **Georgy Girl** "I wanted to show the contrast between the purely physical relationship of Jos and Meredith and the tenderness that even Jos could show to Georgy." Jos is never more than physically attracted to Meredith. When she first suggests marriage to him, he says, "But I don't **know** anything about you!" He realizes, on the other hand, that loving Georgy would mean getting involved with her.

Jos could not make love to Georgy, he says, "and then grab the number 72 bus", as he does with Meredith.

Narizzano's latest film, **Blue**, also deals with a young woman who has a determination to build herself a good life despite the odds against her. Joanna Pettet plays a girl in Texas back in the frontier days of 1848 just after that state came into the Union who nurses and civilizes a young bandit, Blue (Terrence Stamp), after he is captured in a raid on the town.

"It is **My Fair Lady** in reverse", he says. "She tells the young man that she won't marry him until he becomes a gentler person." And she eventually gives him some values to live by in the bargain.

After **Blue** Narizzano will film William Trevor's novel, **The Love Department**, "perhaps with Lynn Redgrave if she is available." The story takes place in Wimbledon, a suburb of London. Like **Georgy Girl**, it is a comedy with a serious undertone. Georgy was offered romance by Jos and security by the man she eventually married. In **The Love Department** the girl has three men who want to marry her. "One offers her companionship, another passion, and the third protection. But she wants all of these qualities in the same man", and is confronted with a choice.

All of these films have the basic theme of young people trying to cope with difficult situations in which they must make realistic and mature decisions. It is an indication that Narizzano wants to choose material for his films which will be relevant to today's audience.

"There is a whole new strata of young people turning to films as they once turned to literature for insights about our contemporary world", he says, recalling his own literary training at Montreal's Loyola College. "Today films are talking their language." Because he respects this fact, he says that he never presents "an image on the screen to be emulated which is reprehensible in itself."

Just as Narizzano presents a basically optimistic point of view in his films, so he is optimistic about the future of films. "This is a marvelous time to make films", he says. He came to England first in 1956 to direct TV production for the BBC after gaining his initial experience in Canada with the CBC. In the 1950's Europe was reviving as a center for film production and young directors were making films that departed drastically from routine film formulas. It was during the past decade that movie making, as *Time* recounts it, "fell out of the pockets of the moneymen in the front offices and into the hands of the directors, writers and actors who suddenly found themselves with more freedom than they had ever known in the dear days that were happily beyond recall."

In the present atmosphere of greater artistic license, Silvio Narizzano is flourishing.

"SENJAMYSON"

an interview with JAY SAYER on the making of 'THE VIKING WOMEN AND THE SEA SERPENT'

The movie was produced and directed by Roger Corman, who has recently proven his legitimacy by directing **The St. Valentine's Day Massacre** and **The Trip.** He's making large-type movies now. But he made his reputation on the Edgar Allen Poe movies which were so popular. All those spooky-dooky things. He's also done those teen-age movies; not the first one, **Teenage Werewolf,** but **Teen Age Caveman,** which starred Robert Vaughan.

Q. Is there a name in the industry for that sort of movie?

A. They are just "B" movies. The budgets are small. Anywhere from 75,000 to 125,000, and it usually takes about three weeks to film them. There is quite a difference in technique. In a big film, if they blow a scene, they just keep shooting it again and again until they get it right. Whatever the reason: sound, lights, flubs. In a "B" film, if you just get the lines right and if they can vaguely make out the proportions of a human being standing there, then they yell, "Print." It's called "low-key lighting", and it originated with the European New Wave films of the 50's. The actor is hired for this sort of "B" film because he is slick, because he can get in front of the camera and find his mark without obviously looking for it, and say his lines as they were written or a reasonable facsimile.

Q. Who financed **The Viking Women?**

A. American International. They hadn't much of a reputation then. They were doing things like **Drag Strip Queen,** and **I Was a Fink for the B'Nai Brith.** My favourite is **The Giant Monster That Sucked New Haven to Death.**

Q. Who wrote the movie?

A. A good question. Someone did write the original script. It was given to me to re-write. When I worked for Corman, I was casting director, actor, story editor, dialogue director. That's another thing about those productions. You have to be able to sing, dance, ride, swim, and toe-tap down a cliff. It was written by two or three guys, promising young writers who didn't keep their promise. It was written in such archaic language that Corman asked me to bring it up to date. It was just passable, barely coherent, and vaguely consistent.

One of the actors was what we called a "dwarf," five foot three or so: Jonathan Hayes. Hayes was always depicted beating up a six-footer. You figured he must have a black-belt in karate that he hit the guy with. Hayes is very much from New York. Talks like Brando. An actress we used had some Shakespearean training. We had about five or six different styles going. No two actors ever feel that the script is written for them. In a major film, you don't dare rewrite the script. A girl sits there and tells you, "Pardon, that was 'very tall,' not just 'tall'," and you say 'Very tall' because when someone like Chayefsky

has written the script for a hundred thousand, every word is worth a $1.50. Whereas in **Viking Women,** we did rewrites on the spot, with each actor improving it according to his acting style. The result was bad James Joyce. All kinds of voices and styles. A stream of consciousness, only a polluted stream.

Q. Can you outline the plot of this movie?

A. Years ago, a boatload of Vikings set out, for what reason is never made clear. Their ladyfolk, the Viking Women, are standing around in shabby Las Vegas costumes — rejects from Western Costume. Ratty, tatty leather things hanging down. Anyway, here are these Viking women standing around saying, "We must go find our men." They had names like Belden, Keilman, Rifkas, Fra-Fra, Loo-Coo, and Pishy-Doody: Freudian names. We made them up. There was a big confrontation scene in which we all met and were calling out names and someone called out, "Irving," and broke up the whole thing. We actually discarded the scene because everyone laughed whenever we tried to do it.

The men had gone off and the only one left was this Jonathan Hayes. So they set off to find the men. They are shipwrecked on an island which as luck would have it, was the home of the savages who had captured the Vikings. The savages were played by three actors and some extras. The three were the king, Richard Devon, his henchman, Mike Forrest (who later played the lead on a really bad TV series at Warner's called **The Alaskans**) and the king's son, Senja, played by me. The king, my father, never addressed me as "My son." It was always, "Senja, my son." Sometimes he ran it together, "Senja-myson." It sounded like a condition. My part was fashioned after the part of Caligula played by Jay Robinson in **The Robe.** Overtones of some sort of sexual perversion. A nasty-little-son-of-a-bitch. It was really written for a 13-14 year old boy. I was 25. The leader of the Viking Women was Abby Dalton, who later became TV wife to Joey Bishop, and to Jacky Cooper on **Hennessy.**

Anyway, we capture the women and my father decides to show off our virility. There is to be a wild boar hunt. So the scene opens in the king's chambers which are pretty seedy because this is a low budget film. I come in led by two Russian wolfhounds and I say, "Father, the boar hunt awaits you!" How — how many actors could do something with that line except maybe get sick? So we go on the boar hunt and I get knocked off my horse by a tree limb. We all had to do our own stunts, by the way, because of the cost. And I get attacked by a wild boar which was a pig with false teeth and Abby Dalton saves me. I'm very grateful, though I resent her. She does give me a spear at the last minute so I get to kill the pig. Saves my pride,

but I still resent her. You can see why. That night we have a feast. That one pig feeds **hundreds.** It's like the trick with the loaves of bread and the fish.

Now. Abby Dalton steals a knife and tries to escape. If my father catches her, he'll kill her. So, I challenge her to an Indian wrestling match over an open fire. I distract my father, you see. She wins, I get a nasty burn, and then there is a bacchanalian dance on top of tables and whipping-off of clothes. Very sexy.

One of the Viking women, only one, has long, dark hair. The rest are blondes. The exception is played by Susan Cabot. I don't know if you remember her. She was, for a long time, "queen" of the Indian princesses in Cowboy films at Universal Studios. She was really a nice Jewish girl from the Bronx. Her great tragedy was that she was set to play opposite Lew Ayres in a Broadway musical called "Shangri-La", and at the last minute she was replaced by an actress named Shirley Yamaguchi. She's never gotten over it. It hurts to be replaced by a Shirley Yamaguchi. Eva Marie Saint, Elizabeth Taylor, all right! But Shirley Yamaguchi??

In any event, Susan decides to betray the other women. She's in love with the Viking leader who is in love with Abby. And she tells him she'll get him out so they can run away together and he says, "No, I don't want to have anything to do with you." She had dark hair, you see, and that shows she is cheap and trashy. Blond hair means virginal, dark hair means a tramp. He rejects her, won't even sleep with her. So she decides to betray all the Vikings to my father, the king, and she gets undone and my father throws her over because the prisoners escape and they run down to the beach where canoes are conveniently waiting and paddle out to sea and this is where they run into the sea serpent. The sea serpent belongs to these savages; he protects them. It's a religious picture, so the Vikings begin to pray to Thor. "O Thor help us, bluh, bluh, bluh." They hit the sea serpent in the eye with a spear and it smarts; so the serpent goes on the rampage and attacks the savages and destroys them instead, and then dies of this mortal wound.

This is the second time in the picture that the Vikings call on Thor. Earlier, my father develops the hots for Abby Dalton and she rejects him, so naturally he decides to put her and her lover to death. So my father decides to put them to the stake and he gives me the privilege of lighting them up with a torch. I don't want to do it because Abby Dalton has been good to me. The movie has psychological overtones. I'm a good kid underneath it all. So I come down with the torch, and I stand there staring at her, staring at her. . . Thereupon my father yells, "Senjamyson." And I whisper that if she'll go off with me, I'll save her. Then the Viking High Priestess, Susan Cabot, begins praying to Thor. She gets a pang of conscience and calls out, "O Thor, I have erred. Cast thy vengeance on these unbelievers and give them what for." It begins to thunder and lightning and rain. The rain puts the fires out. I get scared and pull out my sword and a bolt of lightning comes down and hits it and I cry out, "F-A-A-W-T-H-E-E-E-R," much like Tarzan. Just before I died I spotted a muddy puddle nearby, and I thought it would be kind of "method" if I fell into it, face-down. Very avant-garde. Meanwhile, there's a big duel between Brad Jackson and my father, so I'm face down in the puddle for five minutes . . . breathing. We had to shoot in segments because I could only hold my breath for so long, and I would pop up into the scene. Well, it ends happily and the Vikings go off, and the savages are all destroyed.

Q. How long did it take to film this?

A. About three weeks. We filmed it at a place called Crystal Cove, near Malibu. A lot of movies are made there. All the black lagoon monster films. The local gendarmes get cut in for a piece of the action.

Q. Was there a premiere?

A. Not a formal Hollywood premiere. However, it was premiered on the east at the Brooklyn Paramount which gets them before the neighborhood houses. My parents threw a series of chic cocktail parties and then dragged people there to see it. It has been re-run on TV over and over again.

Q. Where did you get the sea serpent?

A. He was a little rubber worm. The Special Effects people can do wonders with a little wash tub, a little boat and little tiny people in it. And . . . this wormy thing. The more money you can spend on special effects, the better. The less money, the cornier the effects. We did a movie called **The Giant Leeches** and the leech suits were very cheaply made. The mother of the producer's girl friend made them. She sat at home sewing rubber leech suits. And all through the filming, the suits kept coming apart and you would see the leeches floating by with someone's leg sticking out. The effects have a lot to do with making or breaking a film. For the inter-action between the actors and the sea-serpent-worm, they film the worm first, then pose the actors in front of a movie screen on which the worm is projected. Then they film the whole bit. The actors come on, look up, scream-and-carry-on.

Q. Did you come in under the budget?

A. Corman always came in under budget. That's why he gets to do big movies now. Production companies are concerned with costs. Oddly enough, if you have good people working for you, and you bring it in under the budget, the movie may still be all right. Corman discovered a number of good people in these little films: Beverly Garland, Abby Dalton, Ed Nelson

(who plays the lead in **Peyton Place).** By good casting (and I'm pleased to say I was casting director in many of these films), we managed to transcend the limitations of low budget and very bad scripts. It's very hard to get good young writers; it's much easier to discover good new actors. And think of the audiences who go to these films. They aren't very discerning. Give them a little sex and a little violence and profanity: a sub-culture movie that appeals to motorcycle morons, drug strip dum-dums, or pimply-faced potheads, and you have a theatre-going audience. If a movie is made for $75,000, you've made a profit before you've released it, even if you show it in a minimum number of theatres, because companies like American International and Allied Artists have guaranteed releases. There's just no gamble at all.

Q. How much would an actress like Abby Dalton be paid in a movie like this one?

A. SAG minimum was $300 a week. She may have gotten $600 at the most. Susan Cabot had a "name" of sorts so she may have gotten six or six-fifty.

Q. Did you see the completed film before it was released?

A. I thought you were going to ask me if we saw the daily rushes. The actors never saw them because if they did, they might refuse to go on with the shooting. Yes, I did finally see pre-release versions. It's funny; After you've worked hard on a film like **Viking Women,** you come to believe that it's not so bad after all. We did a movie called **Machine Gun Kelly** starring Charles Bronson and Morey Amsterdam, and we began to feel right away that we really had a good film on our hands. But with **Viking Women,** we thought it would be the funniest movie ever made, or the saddest. It turned out campy. The lines are right out of **The Boy Friend** or **Thoroughly Modern Millie.** We say things like, "You are a dastardly fellow and you will meet your deserved end!" And some of the audiences say, "Oh, isn't that funny, isn't that clever!" We didn't do it on purpose; it just turned out that way.

Our hero and Miss Dalton share a tense scene.

I ought to say something more about the production of **Viking Women.** Corman wasn't much of a director as far as acting technique, but he knew how to use the camera. We used a lot of television people; our cameraman, for instance, worked on the **Sea Hunt** series. It's all very involved and concerns the fact that TV technicians are in a different union and cost less. Corman's lack of experience almost killed some of us during **Viking Women.** He insisted on a bunch of us riding our horses up to a cliff's edge and then pulling back in great panic and excitement. We kept hesitating because, while the good riders were up front, me included, those riders in the back weren't experienced and they kept urging the horses on so that we were nearly all swept over the edge. Corman wouldn't take no for an answer. He stood across a ravine and yelled at us through an electric megaphone. Now this was a real cliff-cliff, no special effects. Anyway. Corman told us to run it through and we were meanwhile buzzing amongst ourselves about the danger. We were really scared and Corman kept saying, "Come on, come on, this will be an exciting scene." And this one girl in the group picked up a megaphone and called, "It's pretty dangerous, Roger." And he yelled back, "It's in your contract, Betsy." And she yelled back, "It's in your hat, Roger." And so we never did shoot the scene. Later, we learned that Roger doesn't ride and had no idea about handling horses.

Q. Would you call this movie "art"?

A. Yes, I would. In the past, no, when there were criteria and standards for art. Nowadays, anything goes. So, I'm rather proud of it. There are plenty of theatrical and screen abortions that pass for art. The great cop-out is to call them "happenings." **Viking Women** was at least as good as many of these. Now, it's camp. It's pop art. Why not call it the movie of the absurd? I've stopped apologizing for it because no one apologizes for the **dreck** that comes out elsewhere. Why not bring it out again with kooky silent titles, a silent film music score, and play it at a faster speed?

CRITICISM
and the underground film

BY WILLIAM DEAN

Underground films have now become very much part of the regular cinematic scene: a commercially viable market, Distribution Centres, catalogues of available films, Cinematheques principally for the underground, New Film Clubs, and even programmes of underground films at commercial theatres. After half a century of education into the conventions of the medium, the public quickly adapts to the more experimental of techniques and of subject matter. Fellini's **Juliet of the Spirits**, with its complex visual and erotic imagery, jump cuts, flashes of imagery, demanding intense involvement in the film, and repeated viewings, became and is both an artistic and commercial success. Although it is fashionable to denigrate the Hollywood film because of its preoccupation with the visual-spectacular, and vacuous intellectual content, aimed mainly at securing a large financial return on investment, the film industry centred there has been largely responsible for the education of the public into the convention on which the film as an art-form is founded. The dominance of certain conventions has, however, given rise to reaction among underground film-makers, and brought into question some of the principles on which the criticism of the film has come to depend.

Recently, William Earle in "Some notes on the new Film" (**Tri-Quarterly** number 8, 1967, pages 157-164) repudiated the directorial concern with a sequential narrative line, the use of shots to reveal the obvious providing the viewer with "realistic informational clutter that finally stands as an impediment to whatever poetry might have originally been aimed at". Equally he hits at the commercial film's reliance on the star, and in effect calls for the film to work within the medium itself. And in so doing he rejects one of the standard approaches of criticism, the explication of the work; the "work must essentially be experienced rather than critically explicated". Here of course we come to the core of the problem as it affects criticism. There **appears** to be no adequate vocabulary or grammar of criticism at the moment that can take adequate account of the underground film that repudiates a sequence of causally connected visual images. Hence it seems difficult to deal with a work of patterned images that are not related in any thematic way. Robert Nelson's **Superspread** seemingly must be **experienced** and not explicated.

The difficulties that have arisen with underground films of this type are more illusory than real. The historical development of the film led to its being treated as a photographic record of a dramatic performance, and the principles of criticism were necessarily oriented to the standards of dramatic criticism.

Obviously these principles have no place in the criticism of Hofsess's **Redpath 25**, or works of its type. Why? Mainly the underground is attempting to reassert the obvious: that the film is its own medium, and that the film as an art work must be made in accordance with the nature of the medium. As a movie, the film cannot operate within a frame of reference derived from the theatre, the still photograph, or from painting or sculpture. Each of these forms has developed within its own terms, and the criticism of the form has taken account of the nature of the medium. The film, however, because it is a photographic, visual imitation of reality, has often been confused with these other visual arts. Painting, sculpture, and the still photograph isolate an event out of time, even though the particular work is viewed in time. It is a frozen moment that is realised in the art form. The movie, however, although it realises a moment or series of moments out of time in the sense that the film can be projected over and over again, records a sequence of movements in time. **The essence of the film is a visual presentation of spatiotemporal relationships in motion.**

Given this principle, it follows that the traditional requirement that the dramatic work must have a beginning, middle and end becomes irrelevant to the film as a form, and the usual requirement of the drama that each event should follow causally from the previous unnecessary. Yet we still find even underground film-makers who partially fail to appreciate this principle of the genre. As a recent reviewer indicated (Carl Lauppé in **Varsity**, Toronto, Oct. 20, 1967) the delicate variation of the usually comic January-May motif in Andrew Meyer's **An Early Clue to the New Direction** does not require the written word to inform the audience of the passage of time, especially since time is one of the themes explored in this work in cinematic terms. Equally, Robert Nelson's **The Awful Backlash** fails to understand the necessity of motion in the film when he subjects an audience to fifteen minutes of incoherent mutterings counterpointing the photograph of efforts to straighten out a tangled fishing reel.

What of course is lacking here and in a good many other underground films is also the awareness of the **metaphoric** quality of the visual images that constitute the film as an art form. Once a director avoids a sequential narrative line and favours an enclosed pattern of (juxtaposed) visual images, he has conveyed meaning by the fact of juxtaposition; but while the whole film can then be held to be a metaphor, the constituent images will be metaphoric only to the degree that they are self-sustaining and subsumed within the totality. The metaphor, and the image, will be banal or cliché to the extent that they do not interrelate and so contribute to the totality of the whole film as a metaphor. The meaningful metaphoric nature of the film is best illustrated by the work of Kenneth Anger.

Eaux d'Artifice gains its power not only from the technical achievement of the photography, but also from the subsumption of the various images within the controlling image and metaphor of the fountain. The indeterminacy of the direction to be taken by the baroque, figurine-like figure who flits in and out of the rows of the gushing fountains conveys the masturbationary and even homosexual content of the film without its having to be expressly stated. The restraint, and equally the power of this work marked a considerable advance over Anger's earlier film where similar themes are purveyed by conventional metaphors without the technical mastery of the camera, although as an early film by a teen-ager, **Fireworks** is still a remarkable achievement. In this, as in all of his work, Anger achieves an empathetic involvement of the audience in the film as such. Relying on the convention of the dream, the viewer is taken with the boy to the bar, participates in the encounter with the sailors, feels the battery, and is aware that the cream that covers his face is an orgasmic, ejaculatory symbol. In **Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome** the ritual of the oriental theatre becomes the basis of the metaphoric portrayal of transvestite hallucination. Yet the film is not simply a record of an hallucination. Its **poetic** power is firmly linked to the ritual conveyed in the figures reminiscent of the Kabuki theatre.

The need for extensive criticism of the film, especially the underground film, is well illustrated by the recent Canadian film, **The Hyacinth Child's Bedtime Story**, directed by Burton Rubenstein and Sara Bezaire. Despite the pretentious title, the reference to the hyacinth image that reoccurs in the writing of Jean Genet carries archetypal reference to the myths of the dying god and to his revival. It is essentially a fertility myth. The hyacinth as such does not appear in the film; it is recollected only in the purplish colour used to surround the child being forcibly dominated at the commencement of the action. This is sufficient to reinforce the death and rebirth pattern of

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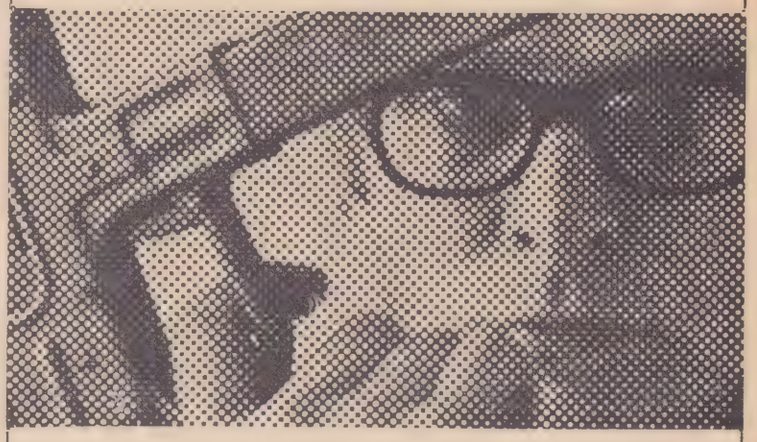

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LOOK FOR PENGUINS WHERE GOOD BOOKS ARE SOLD — ASK FOR A COMPLETE CATALOGUE — PENGUIN — THE PAPERBACK PIONEER WITH THE LARGEST PRESTIGE LIST IN THE WORLD!

the metaphors. The child is superceded by the youth; the colours change largely to red, the traditional colour for blood, death, revolution, destruction, and life. While the ritual dance of the children procedes, the youth, excluded from the group activity, and alone, symbolically masturbates when he holds the candelabra and the set of burning candles between his legs. The religious import of this sequence is conveyed not only by means of the candle imagery and the awareness of purification through fire, but also through the chantral music in the background.

The transition from the baby to the youth is marked by several images of artistic destruction. The attempts of artistic expression are washed away and the later ritual of the children seems to posit a social norm that denies the liberated artistic spirit. The destructiveness of social conformity and inclusion into ordinarily accepted roles finds visual demonstration in the recurring image of the pig. It is something we never get away from, as, in all its filth, it continues to eat and destroy. Yet framed within the archetypally significant hyacinth colourings, the god of innocence and artistic expression in the child will continue to be reborn.

When this film was first shown at the Toronto Cinethon, June 1967, one reviewer described **The Hyacinth Child** as as obscure as it was interminable. This could understandably be the reaction after one viewing. But as I have attempted to suggest, the metaphoric structure of the work indicates that it is a highly complex film of great originality — despite the obvious technical derivativeness from Hofsess's **Redpath 25** and Fellini's **Juliet of the Spirits.** Certainly criticism of this sort, or of any other sort, is not going to exhaust discussion of any film of creative genius. If the film can be exhausted by criticism it ought never to have been made. But confronted by a difficult film, such as **The Hyacinth Child,** the viewer at large has a right to expect direction from the critic; but not to expect that his own responses will be replaced by those of the critic.

The Hyacinth Child, like the films of Anger, is more in the tradition of the poetic image. But much of the underground is directed to a didactic purpose. When Earle says that a film must be experienced and not explicated, he really cannot have in mind the volume of films that take as their starting point an attitude of social protest. The distribution catalogues are clogged with films which seek to propagandise a point of view of social commitment. Jeff Dell's **Not as Yet Decided** is described as "a powerful comment on racial strife"; his **Dodge City** is "an intense film about war and its effects". Tom Palazzolo's **America is in Real Trouble** is "a cynical look at America's might, both military and civilian, to the tune of right-wing protest songs". And the intensity of concern with moral issues is affected in the prominence given to social problems in these underground films. The critic here has a double duty. Not only must he explicate and describe the film as a film, he must also attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of the didacticism rendered in cinematic terms. Inevitably of course he must also consider the film simply as propaganda, and as such reflect upon the ideas purveyed.

Often this will lead to obscuring the film as a work in its own right; but insofar as this happens it will be, partially, the fault of the director for utilising the film as a medium for purposes not really appropriate to that medium. To use the film as a means of propaganda is to subordinate the medium to the message. The underground film is defensible only if it treats its matter in symbolic, metaphoric, visual and motionary spatio-temporal terms. That this can be done, and is being done, is obvious from some of the works I have mentioned, e.g. Anger's **Fireworks,** and **Eaux d'Artifice,** and Rubenstein and Bezaire's **The Hyacinth Child.** Robert Nelson's **Oh Dem Watermelons** is an established classic of this sort.

Obviously then there is a need for criticism of the underground film; further to make the public at large aware of the newer conventions being formulated; to explicate particular works; to evaluate a director's achievement within the medium; and to develop a grammar of the film as a visual, metaphoric imitation of reality, realised through images motionary in space and time. To assume that the critic is unnecessary to the underground is as illusory as many of the themes treated in the films themselves.

From the aforegoing it will be clear that I do not see the underground film as inconsistent with the regular commercial movie. The latter continues the principles of the theatre, with its emphasis on acting and causal plot, and criticism of films of this sort will always remain a branch of dramatic criticism. But the underground film has the opportunity of developing the film as an art form in its own right, and according to its own terms. And here again the critic has a duty towards the making of underground films: to insist that the maker himself work within the nature of the medium; if he does not then the critic must evaluate it in accordance with the best standards of the commercial cinema, and according to accepted standards of dramatic criticism.

Most of the films referred to are listed with hiring charges in one or other of the following distribution catalogues: **Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre,** Catalogue No. 2, September, 1967; **Second City Film Center,** Catalogue No. 1, and Supplement.

"a necklace of
incomparable beauty
and unmeaning"

poen

A reading to pictures
words
Leonard Cohen
pictures
Josef Reeve

35mm and 16mm black and white
4 minutes 35 seconds

Produced by
The National Film Board of Canada

the crazy world of LAUREL

Defining a comedian's appeal to his audience is not always easy, but one rule that seems to be a standard — certainly it applies to all the great comedians — is that they should subtly make themselves inferior to the audience, not so much in a sense of humility as in personal ability. We automatically take to our hearts characters in whom we can recognize much of ourselves, but of whom we can honestly say that we are a little bit smarter. Perhaps this is why the peak vogue for a brash, wisecracking, self-confident comedian like Bob Hope was comparatively brief, while the less spectacular popularity of Jack Benny, whose comedy was likewise verbal but more humble and self-effacing, has nevertheless been more constant. In Laurel & Hardy we can all recognize human failings that are not too exaggerated. Vanity tells us that we're not quite as dumb as Laurel and not quite as pompous as Hardy; but a slightly distorted honesty tells us that our friends and neighbors have exactly those failings. In laughing at Laurel & Hardy, we are affectionately laughing at our friends and ourselves, but from a safe and superior distance.

One can break down their appeal a little further. With certain comics — the Marx Brothers or W.C. Fields — there are no half-measures. One either reveres or detests them. Curiously, with Laurel & Hardy the division is rather different: One either adores or ignores them. They do not seem to inspire the reactions of intense antagonism that other highly specialized comedians do. Children seem to like and understand Laurel & Hardy best of all, perhaps because the two comedians are adults reacting to everything in a genuinely child-like manner. Men like Laurel & Hardy not just for their own sense of superiority, but for their virility and direct physical action in confronting everyday problems. Women, as a group, like Laurel & Hardy not at all. Asked why, they will usually dismiss them as "silly" and comment on the pain and cruelty in much of their slapstick. But this is undoubtedly a subterfuge, for women must sense the perennial battle against their sex that Laurel & Hardy carried on in their films. Few comedians have had the courage to use their leading ladies as anything but stock heroine-figures, lovely creatures to be protected, respected, even worshipped . . . But by far the majority of the Laurel & Hardy women fall into two camps — the first includes the gold-digging Jezebel, the prostitute (explicit, if never actually so stated) without the heart of gold, the schemer who benefits from the boys' endeavors and then dumps them ungratefully, the crook or murderess, the gangster's mistress, roles played by a number of actresses but never better than by their frequent nemesis, Mae Busch; the other category we can loosely but accurately define as "the wives." It is undoubtedly this latter category which has done

WM K EVERSON & HARDY

the most to prevent approval of Laurel & Hardy by the Women of America. Even admitting the frustrations and difficulties of living with Mr. Laurel & Mr. Hardy, this is a sore-headed, shrewish, grasping bunch; forever snapping, shouting, nagging, domineering, hoarding every dollar, begrudging their husbands an occasional night out, settling arguments amid a shower of pots, pans, vases hurled with unerring accuracy, rolling pins and shotguns . . .

In constructing their films, Laurel & Hardy used a very simple modus operandi, depending far more on situation than on plot. Like children with a set of building blocks, they'd take a single idea, and on its base build mathematically and precisely, sometimes allowing themselves to shoot off on a tangent, but never swerving from a predetermined destination. Very often their comedies would start off with two consecutive sequences intended as the overall structure, only to find that they could extract so much comedy from the first situation that they never even needed the second. Thus, **A Perfect Day,** was intended to show the frustrations and delays in setting off in their car for a picnic, with the picnic itself planned as the climatic third of the film. But so many gags came out of the preparation of sandwiches, the frayed tempers, the problems of fitting a gout-afflicted Edgar Kennedy into their car, the avoiding of the local minister (it is a Sunday, of course), encounters with irate neighbors and prolonged farewells to friendly ones, that when the balky old automobile finally does come to life and depart for the picnic, it only has time to round a corner and settle gracefully beneath the murky waters of a gigantic mudpuddle before the "End" title appears. This ultra-painstaking "milking" of every gag and the precise — sometimes *too* precise — construction was one of the prime virtues of the Laurel & Hardy films, but at times also one of their greatest drawbacks. When the method worked, and it usually did, it gave audiences the joy of *anticipating* a gag far in advance. But when their material was below par, or the directorial pacing was off, this same kind of construction would produce exasperating slowness and heavy-handedness, and the films were lucky indeed to have the physical presences of Laurel & Hardy, for no other clowns could do so much with so little.

Two unique comedy motifs have always dominated the Laurel & Hardy films, the most spectacular of these being the now-familiar sado-masochistic exchanges of savage, yet well-ordered and almost "civilized", violence. For an argument which may be either a climactic wrap-up or a carefully built orgy which consumes the entire running time, Laurel & Hardy, solidly united for once, square off for battle against an opponent who is usually James Finlayson, he of the bald head, pickle-shaped nose, and walrus moustache, or

small and apparently mild-mannered Charles Hall. The argument, of course, starts over nothing at all; a misunderstanding, an imagined insult, a pure accident. The initial blow is merely a mild chastisement, designed to put an immediate end to the bothersome business; but the retaliatory gesture is stronger and more painful, and demands a correspondingly more powerful comeback. And thus it builds with a kind of businesslike and casual sadism, slap followed by kick, a tie amputated just below the knot succeeded by a shirt ripped up the back, a poke in the eye supplemented by the yanking of a handful of hair, and when all the physical indignities have been disposed of, then the offensive is changed to personal property. Starting with the wrecking of a watch, nothing is spared until the orgy of destruction has expended its fury, and with automobile, home, store and business all totally demolished, nothing is left for the opponents to do but patch it all up, proclaim a truce, and scheme some little wrap-up indignity that will give at least one of them a face-saving final victory. The beauty of all these exchanges is in their rich contrast of savage temper explosions with calm and orderly reasoning processes. It is one of the rules of the game that the victim make no move to protect himself or his property. As Hardy delicately pours a large bottle of sticky syrup all over the money in Charlie Hall's cash register, or deliberately lifts a large barrel of lard over Hall's head and then rams it home, Hall waits and suffers silently and stoically, almost as interested in what is going to happen to him next as are his tormenters. He knows full well that it will be his turn in a moment, and that Laurel & Hardy in a like sportsmanly manner, will submit passively to whatever he has to offer.

The second, subtler, less spectacular but probably even more effective gambit in their comedy stockpile is Hardy's stare, or direct appeal to the audience. It predates, and in any case far transcends, those now overly-familiar gags of the Bob Hope and **Hellzapoppin'** genre, in which on-screen characters converse with the audience, or toss off wisecracks about the movie itself. Importantly, Hardy never speaks a word to the audience. He thus never comes *out* of the picture, but rather invites the audience to join him *in* it. In moments of despair and hopelessness, after having been on the receiving end of some particularly spectacular ineptitude from Laurel, he turns that chubby face directly to the camera, a resigned shrug of the shoulders, a helpless widening of the eyes, as much in disbelief as in outrage, and a martyred sigh, literally asking the audience to spare him the compassion and understanding he needs so badly, and by sharing his burden to lighten it. The same stare also tells audiences that they have been through it all with him before so many times that they, like him, must have become fatalistically resigned to living with misfortune . . .

In addition to the violence of the mutually-destructive bouts already discussed, the infliction of pain, often in a physically repellent manner, was very much a part of their comic arsenal. Pain, alas, *can* be very funny — to the non-injured party — and Laurel & Hardy realized this very quickly. But they also saw that, in movie terms, pain is funniest when it is clearly an illusion. Thus neither they nor their opponents are ever really hurt, despite the most appalling misfortunes, and although clever editing and construction often suggests otherwise, the *act* of inflicting pain itself is usually only suggested in their comedies. A classic example: In **The Music Box,** Hardy is bent low, out of camera range, behind a crate. Laurel enters from the left of screen, carrying a ladder. One end of the ladder disappears into the area where Hardy is concealed; a dull thud and an agonized howl tells us that contact has been made; and Hardy rises majestically into view, hand nursing and covering a presumably all-but-demolished eye! Sadism worked and was funny in their silent comedies because the very absence of sound created an unreal fantasy world, in which one could accept a man's being kicked off a high cliff, landing on his head, getting up and nonchalantly strolling away, merely because seeing was believing and there were no sounds from the realistic outside world to shatter our belief in what we saw. That is why Harold Lloyd climbing his buildings in **Safety Last,** a silent, is so much funnier and more effective than Harold Lloyd doing exactly the same in a talkie, **Feet First.** In the latter, we are suddenly in a *real* world — we hear Lloyd's gasps of exertion and his desperate cries for help; the muffled street noises constantly remind us how far he has to fall, and of the very real danger he faces. Consequently the humor of the situation lessens, even if the excitement quotient rises proportionately. Laurel & Hardy, however, used sound creatively, to maintain and extend their fantasy world. Thus, when Hardy hits Laurel on the head with a heavy wrench, we hear the sound of a great bell reverberating in an empty echo chamber. When Hardy is blown up by his gas stove or takes a mighty tumble downstairs, the actual moment of impact takes place off-screen, the sound track enhancing its comedy value with exaggerated effects which make a simple fall sound like the San Francisco earth-quake. "Black" humor is rampant in most of the Laurel & Hardy films; when sickness is part of the plot (as in **Laughing Gravy**) it is invariably something rather loathsome like smallpox; when in that same

film Charlie Hall takes his gun and goes off screen to commit suicide, we hear not one but *two* evenly spaced reports; bumps on the head grow to astronomical proportions, and when Hardy falls into a rain barrel, it is invariably covered with thick ice, so that he has to remove the broken chunks before he can escape from his predicament. When they turn in for the night, fleas share their bed. A wedding cake is covered with noisy flies, which Laurel assassinates with Flit, not realizing that their carcasses will remain in the icing. And even for the time-honored fall into the bathtub, the bath water contrives to look incongruously filthy. All these elements are never stressed by Laurel & Hardy, however. They are merely used as casual punctuation, so that while black humor is a constant in their work, what we now term "sick" humor never was.

There seems to have been no rule of thumb in determining which of their films turned out as masterpieces and which disappointed. Some of the films with the most promising concepts turned out to be among their weakest efforts, while others which must have seemed run-of-the-mill in script or story-board form emerged as classics. Certainly their directors seemed to have little to do with their successes or failures. Like Harold Lloyd, they never actually directed their own films, but they controlled them every foot of the way, and directed their directors. Only once — on the feature **Sons of the Desert** — did they encounter a director who seemed to have a perfect rapport with their style and who was able to build on and expand what they brought to the film. Curiously, this director was William Seiter, a master of tasteful family comedies, but hardly the kind of film-maker one would expect to be an ideal mentor for purveyors of a very different kind of comedy. Unfortunately, he made no other films with them. Their other directors ranged from hacks to genuine craftsmen and the skills of the directors often seemed quite unrelated to the merits of the films . . .

There is no clear-cut dividing line between the silent and the sound comedies of Laurel & Hardy. No comics made the precarious transfer from silents to sound with more ease and assurance than Stan and Ollie; it was necessary to change neither their screen images nor the basic pattern of their films. It's true that the bulk of their really creative work had been done in the last three years of the silent cinema and that their talkies were largely reworkings of their silent gags and in some cases exact remakes of whole subjects. But sound did bring a whole new range to their comedy, particularly in the case of Hardy, whose eloquent and grandiose posturings of gallantry and courtesy — a façade made the more effective by the reduced circumstances his plots placed him in, and the shabby clothes he wore — could now be further punctuated by dialogue. The strange cameraderie between the two boys (basically they like and are devoted to each other, despite Hardy's bullying and a selfishness that usually escapes his dull-witted cohort) could be far more subtly explored in exchanges of dialogue. A whole new array of catch-phrases came into being from the lips of Mr. Hardy: the resigned "*Another* fine mess you've gotten me into!", the plaintive "Why don't you do something to *help*, me?", the half-apologetic "This is my friend, Mr. Laurel." The Laurel & Hardy talkies are full of glorious small talk, and many of the lines have the same kind of surrealistic absurdity as the visual gags. Answering the phone in **Going Bye Bye,** Hardy bids the caller hold on a moment with "Pardon me just a moment, my ear is full of milk!" — an explanation that in the context of the film makes perfect sense. Only the deliberate "joke lines" seem to fall flat in their movies; Laurel & Hardy are humanly and inherently funny in themselves, so alien to the field of stand-up comics that "one-liners" seem forced and heavy in their hands.

Sound also gave the boys added props for their sight gags; apart from its contribution to the gags of violence, already covered, sound was often used to punctuate a deliberately unreal visual gag. One of the most oft-used gags was for Hardy to fall below the frame line into the ocean or a pond. An unnaturally long pause or a slowly diminishing cry from Hardy would stress the dizzy depths of the fall. Then a very loud off-screen splash, followed by the deliberately unconvincing arrival of the water on screen — quite clearly the work of two handymen just throwing a couple of buckets of water from behind the cameras.

If one has any overall complaint to make concerning Laurel & Hardy, it is only that they were far too complacently aware of their limitations, or at least of the boundaries of their own world. . . they were content to rework, to polish, to perfect, but never to explore. In one sense they may have been wise. The least successful comedies of Buster Keaton and Harry Langdon were those in which they tried to be radically different. Perhaps Laurel & Hardy's complacency was occasioned by the fact that they were never fully appreciated by the critics, and thus, unlike Chaplin, Keaton and Langdon, had no intellectual reputation to live up to, and to try to improve on. . . But Laurel & Hardy were never faced with such prodding or stimulation, and while limiting themselves so severely produced some masterpieces of organized simplicity, it also meant that they had no qualms about accepting the second-rate at times. But second-rate Laurel & Hardy is still a good deal better than first-rate almost anybody else.

CBC

Cast:

Stanley Kramer: 45 year old American director of such films as **Judgment at Nuremburg, Ship of Fools, It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad, World, On the Beach.** Tanned, grey-haired, and fit, Mr. Kramer is "charming".

Girl: U. of T. student

Others: members of the Director's Guild of Canada students at the University of Toronto.

Scene I:

The movie opens with a shot of Kramer eating dinner with the girl and various directors at the Park Plaza Hotel in Toronto. Camera bulbs flash occasionally as the party progresses.

During most of this scene, the camera rests on Kramer and dinner partner, talking in hushed tones. Occasionally Kramer's voice is heard but usually it's voice-over of the disjointed thoughts of his dinner partner. The camera zooms in for a close-up of the pair and holds on them, as the girl's thoughts are heard.

Script:

Girl: When I think of Stanley Kramer, I think of terms like cop out, and sell out, and I shudder at the films that he's made. But he's here, explaining to me over a candle-light dinner, that he isn't "satisfied with any film that he's made — not by a long shot."

So I say, let's get down to the nitty gritty, and I try to expose him for "the big hypocrite he is", and I ask him where he lost his integrity, why he deals with "controversial subjects" that are no longer controversial, and where being a producer leaves off and a director begins?

And he looks bewildered. And with complete seriousness he says "an artist must always search for truth . . . that he must be motivated strongly to make a picture, that there is a Negro problem in the States: it's not a dead issue, and that when he makes a film, he makes it for himself and not for Mr. average middle-class American."

And so where does that leave me? He claims "not to know what the establishment is", and asserts that he "has been fighting it all his life." He says, "I have been proud to do things about matters which are controversial." And he mentions **Home of the Brave** (1949, "the first film to tackle the colour problem seriously"), **Champion** (the boxing industry), **The Men** (1950, about paraplegics), **The Defiant Ones** (race relations), **On the Beach** (atomic warfare), **Judgment at Nuremburg** (war guilt), and so on.

I'm impressed. "En bloc", his work has solidarity and respectability. But still I know that I've never really liked any of his films, that none of them have ever had any of the magic of a Bergman, Kurosawa, or Antonioni film. His films have that false air of integrity, are distastefully laden with platitudes, and his subjects are treated with a slickness that just manages to skirt the issue.

His latest film **Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?** with Spencer Tracy, Katherine Hepburn, and Sidney Poitier, is a case in point. When Dean Rusk and George Hees both have the same problem with their daughters as Tracy, you can bet the "problem" is cold, stone dead.

Sure maybe he's reaching a lot of nice old ladies and liberals (so-called) with the film. Are public service messages art? Especially when they gross millions? Is Kramer really trying to "educate America", a lecturer sermonizing from a screen rather than from a pulpit?

But he claims to "make films only for himself." And, paradoxically, in the next breath he'll talk about awakening people to "the alarming degree of the necessity for conformity in the States."

He'll expound expansively on his choice of subject matter — "controversial, and topical". And yet, I have this nagging cynicism about the lack of controversy and topicality of his films. And I wonder out loud, if there is a connection between the "let's sock it to them, baby" gutsiness of his earlier films, which failed to rake it in at the box office, and his more recent milk toasty films which have paid nicely for the baby-sitter. He explains how it is that "the movies are big business", that in a "free enterprise system everything has got to pay its own way." And,

being very naive, I suggest: an arty commercial film? And he squelches that gambit — "All films are art forms of one type or other."

I decide to move on and ask if being a producer and having to account, therefore, for the books enters into it. Looking somewhat tired, he says "Of course", and tells me how he hustles: like he tells A that B is the hero, and then he tells B that A is the heroine, hoping that A and B will sign, then he sees C, and asks him for backing for a film that will star A and B. And I thought that only James Garner played the wheeler-dealer parts.

As he talks, I begin to realize that this star-casting — he put Sophia Loren in the **Pride and the Passion** for all those cleavage scenes, if nothing else — is not selling out in his language. "It's putting the show on the road", so you can have a show to put on the road.

He tells me how Ava Gardner was "a pain in the ass", in **On the Beach** but he still wanted her for the part. And he'll relate one of his charming anecdotes about why he made **On the Beach**. At the time, the cold war was getting hotter by the hour and his son brought home a note from school asking whether — in case of an atomic blast — would he (the parent) prefer the child to be sent home, be picked up or left at school? "When you get a letter like that, what else could I do but make **On the Beach**?".

So I see that he has a higher purpose in mind — and that maybe the ends do justify the means. But wouldn't it be nice if the means were nicer, too?

Then, Kramer smiling charmingly — a really charming guy — dinner is over. Camera zooms out on couple, pans over guests leaving table.

Scene II:
Scene changes with a slow dissolve to Kramer at Convocation Hall, University of Toronto, where a lacklustre question and answer period is going on. Camera zooms out to take in the two other people on the platform: host of dinner party and Kramer's dinner partner. The sound track is the droning sound of questions and replies, mixes with the theme song of the film, **Love Conquers Everything.** Superimposed over the other two tracks is the girl's thoughts.
Script:
Girl: God he's nervous. He keeps clenching and unclenching his fists behind his back and moving around like a rooster preparing for a cock fight. But the questions are coming nice and easy — very respectful, very student-like. Not at all what he expected or wanted. No one is impertinent and I wonder if someone will ask "Why do you make such shitty films, Mr. Kramer?" But no one does.

He's got them in the palm of his hand. Really, like butter, it's that easy. He's not nervous anymore. His eyes are sparkling. He's up there and really enjoying it.

His voice trembles as he mentions Spencer Tracy. He tells them how sick he was, and how they "had to play to coat hangers in the afternoon, because Spence was too sick to work in the afternoons." And he laughs when he speaks of Katherine Hepburn. "She plays two sets of tennis every day, stands in the corner on her head for fifteen minutes . . . She's as healthy as a horse."

The answers are the same as the ones that he gave me at dinner — word for word. I feel disappointed but then, I guess, he's been asked the same questions so many times he could say them stoned. The tempo is slowing down. No one really has anything else they want to ask him, so Kramer winds it up.

Scene III:
Sound of applause as Kramer leaves platform. Camera follows Kramer out of hall. Cut in Kramer entering another room. Scene is a cocktail party in Kramer's honour. People at dinner present, girl, and others. Kramer sits down on sofa, surrounded by others, some sitting at his feet. Girl standing on fringe. Again her thoughts are heard over the hubbub of chatter, drinks being poured, etc.
Script:
Girl: This scene is just too phoney to work. I mean, people just do not sit at the feet of famous directors, lapping up all the pearls of their wisdom even in bad movies, or do they?

Kramer is telling them how he was disappointed with the questions. He taught two years at UCLA's film school and knows "what students can be like." He seems quite content, telling about Spencer "being sick", and "having to play to coat hangers" and Katherine "being as healthy as a horse."

The scene is dragging, Kramer is starting to get bored with all the attention, with the same lacklustre questions that are very nice, very docile, and very polite. I'm sure if someone said something really hard hitting and honest to him right now, Kramer would embrace him like a long-lost brother.

Because I think that he's honest. He believes that he's honest, anyway, and I don't know if he's putting himself on or not.

Well this is it. He gets up. People make way for him. He comes over to me. We shake hands, and I thank him for coming. He smiles.

Movie ends with heads turning to follow Kramer out the door.

LA CHINOISE

Pierrot le Fou
and
Masculin Feminin
but this time for the head
not for the heart

A film in colour
especially (again)
red, white and blue
or (sometimes)
red, blue and yellow

An anti-American film
in hommage to American films

The children of Marx
and Coca-Cola
as the devotees of Mao
and Nicholas Ray
(exemplified in a
pop song about the Chairman
sung by a group of
Gallic Beachboys (c. 1964))

Like all Godard films
a movie about the cinema
but this time also very much
about the theatre
especially Brecht
and his most Brechtian film yet
(clap-board sequences left in)

Godard's answer to
"the elegant left (who)
. . . get excited over Mao
tse Tung . . .
(but) are bored by **Muriel**
(by Alain Resnais)
or by its sequel
Deux ou Trois Choses que
je sais d'elle
my last film"

A clever, witty
"thought provoking" film
easy
none of the pain
of **Le Mepris**
or **Pierrot**
(that Bob calls an open wound)
but a film that *swings*
a film by
Jean-Luc
Cinema
Godard

J. Foster Stackhouse

Director and script: J.-L. Godard; photographer: Raoul Coutard; editor: Agnes Guillemot, Delphine Desfons; music: Karl-Heinz Stockhausen; with: Anne Wiazemski, Jean-Pierre Léaud, Michel Semeniako, Lex de Bruijn, Juliet Berto; Eastman Colour; ratio: 1.33:1.

THE PRESIDENT'S ANALYST

The President's Analyst is a straight Hollywood picture, smoothly photographed in Technicolour and introducing bland Miss Joan Delaney (an ex-*Seventeen* magazine model) as James Coburn's girlfriend. Just the ingredients for a mindless comedy, right? Wrong. Not a shred of mercy is spared for anyone in the film: it's low-key comedy convincingly satirizes the extremism of both the Left and Right, Cold War logic, hippies, the corporate mind, the psychiatric mentality and middle-class, suburbian mores. The satire is effective because it is well-controlled. It never gets so funny that you can forget all your troubles and laugh — instead **The President's Analyst** makes you a little more distrustful of the manners and motives of those it pokes "fun" at.

Much of the plot, characters and situations of the film are inane, yet they are curiously familiar, and because of this, it is essentially a frightening picture. James Coburn, handpicked as the U.S. President's personal analyst, finds the pressure of the job gets on his nerves and runs away, first to suburbia, then to a hippie colony, and finally into the arms of his two buddies (Godfrey Cambridge and Severn Darden), who are themselves agents of the American and Russian governments respectively.

"We're liberal, you know, we've been on a couple of weekend protest marches. But you should see the right wingers next door. Real fascists; oughtta be gassed." This line, uttered by one of the film's larger-than-life characters, sets the trend for **The President's Analyst.** It is a wierd and more-than-Bondian "fantasy", to be sure, but the film's realism is not to be contested. The plot often threatens to become hilarious, but it never boils over, and this is its great merit. It makes **Dr. Strangelove** look pale in comparison, because the latter chose comedy over reality as its preference. In the film at hand the purpose is reversed; its wit is unobtrusive. Furthermore, its satire is so carefully directed at everyone that the film's lack of moralizing and pretentiousness (so apparent in all those art-films, intellectual extravaganzas, and Meaningful Movies) is particularly refreshing. Its point is never lost in self-congratulatory poses.

The numerous sight gags and clever jokes are handled superbly by the cast, notably Cambridge and Darden. Fine cameo performances are also given by Barry (Eve of Destruction) McGuire as the mind-blown hippie, and Pat Harrington as the mechanically mindless president of The Phone Company. Strangely enough, the past year's big hits — **Blow-Up**, **Bonnie and Clyde**, and even old doddering **Persona** — seem more "entertaining" when compared to **The President's Analyst.** Its message is more bluntly presented, and consequently, if it is not a better film, it is a much more valid one.

Juan Rodriguez

Producer: Lawrence Turman. Director: Mike Nichols. Screenplay by Calder Willingham & Buck Henry, based on the novel by Charles Surtees. Photography: Robert Surtees. Music: Paul Simon, sung by Simon and Garfunkel. Stars: Anne Bancroft, Dustin Hoffman, Katharine Ross. Panavision, Technicolor. Released by Embassy. 105 minutes.

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER?

"Screw them all," says Spencer Tracy, meaning any honkie racists who mightn't want his daughter to marry Sidney Poitier.

The outstanding achievement of Stanley Kramer's **Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?** is to present intermarriage directly and approvingly. Or so it would seem. On the other hand **GWCTD?** may be seen as the latest in a long line of movies that stifle as they liberalize, conceal as they expose. What is concealed in this instance is the fact that the nearer Poitier moves towards the white man, the wider becomes his separation from the majority of black people. This of course wouldn't matter in a film that doesn't address itself to the problem of racism; but this film does intend to do just that. It fails because it ends up talking about different shades of white.

Poitier here becomes almost an anti-black. As a first-in-his-class Geneva scientist, he occupies a place that is whiter than white. Even the suffering theme, in previous films good for a few lines on The Past Plight of the Negro, has in the white light of Geneva quietly been spirited away.

Equally intriguing is the view of lower-class blacks. Take Tillie the Maid, "who's been with us for twenty-two years." After more than a decade's absence, the traditional Negro servant has made a comeback, devoted, stout, a little comical — outspoken only because she *is* devoted — and very satisfied with her lot. ("I don't like to see a member of my race getting above hisself . . . Civil rights is civil rights, but this is something *else*!") If Poitier himself is no longer Uncle Tom renewed, perhaps it is because the audience has finally made the great distinction between bourgeois and under-class black.

So much for the "good" under-class. With the "bad" one comes black militancy. Tracy backs into a boy's car, then offers to pay. The boy refuses; in rage and almost in tears, he tells Tracy that he should never have bumped into him in the first place. He is aggressive, insolent, emotional and ridiculous. He is one reason for liberal Tracy's almost refusing to let his daughter marry Poitier.

The incident is entirely unnecessary as far as plot is concerned. One may legitimately wonder whether it was not meant to appeal to a particular view of race relations. The boy's attitude may correspond with the view that some blacks are emotional, violent and stupid, and that their actions are hurting the "good" ones. That the car is damaged by accident implies of course that whites have never been malevolent or systematically oppressive. (It's all been some horrible mistake.) The whole point is that the boy's anger is unjustified; and Tracy's reaction of fury and disgust is portrayed as being that of any honest American.

Why does this movie, its liberal credentials nailed almost shamelessly to the mast for all to see, suddenly descend like an avenger onto this poor black street waif? And why should Tracy, with the audience's sympathy, get so fired-up over a retarded child?

After Uncle Tom, the most conventional black image has been supplied by countless adaptions of "Topsy". The droll and childish figure of Mrs. Stowe's novel became a prototypical feature of American comic relief. Shorn of her original shrewdness, this imbecilic, monkeyish black clown remained a common role until the end of the 'forties — Bogart's **High Sierra** of 1948 is an example — and then disappeared. **GWCTD?** is the only revival. Ridiculous and irrational, the teen-ager is Topsy in a leather jacket.

The Topsy image implies both fear and hostility. Although the Black Man cannot be portrayed as a menace (in **Birth of a Nation**, any menace is exorcised by having white actors play black roles), nevertheless the prevalence of slave revolts served to remind The Man that black acquiescence was terrifyingly impermanent. Uncle Tom, then, was a consoling image. And he had some correspondence with the resigned portion of the under-class. But what of real or potential threats? Psychologically, they could be erased by turning the threat-carriers into clowns. Fear is dissolved by laughter and even the best-mannered audiences were to find new, socially-derived, humor in imbecility.

So when Poitier, famous, distinguished and gorgeous at thirty-seven, is married off to the horrible Houghton ingenue, it is indeed a breakthrough. With this figure siphoned off into the great consensus, it is now possible to get on with the job of presenting the residue — the black under-class — in two of its oldest forms: as straight Tom (Tillie) and as slightly adapted imbecile (Topsy). Is this latter the

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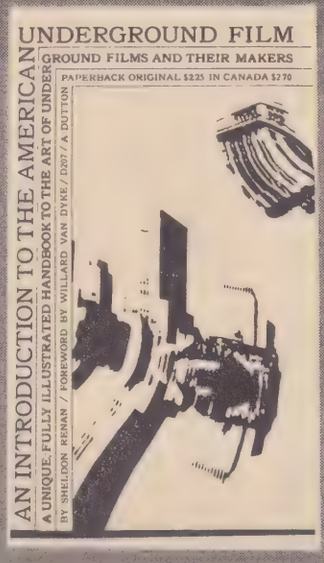
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first violent under-class figure in American film? (I except gangsters, who are not consciously seen as belonging to that class, and the thugs of **On the Waterfront** who are pitted against workers.) Interestingly enough, in films of the extreme Right **(Red Tomahawk, El Dorado)**, bit parts similar to the Topsy role are associated with Orientals.

With Poitier, we've already had Uncle Tom in a number of guises. To these we may now add Topsy. But what of Eliza, the light-skinned, lustrous-haired, well-educated houseslave heroine of Mrs. Stowe? Her famous flight over the Ohio River ice, replete with baby and bloodhounds, was a high point of American fiction. She ended up as a housewife, a real orange-blossom lady, not, it will be recalled, in a perfectly good, near free state like Ohio, but in Canada.

In **GWCTD?**, she has come into her own. For now the Americans want her back. As Uncle Toms and Topsies in real life stop cooperating, an alliance with Eliza would be very nice indeed. Really very nice. Deepening class antagonism, like misery, is acquainting The Man with strange bedfellows. Nowadays he's even lying down with Eliza.

Catherine Sugy

Producer and Director: Stanley Kramer. Screenplay by William Rose. Photography: Sam Leavitt. Music: Devol. Stars: Spencer Tracy, Sidney Poitier, Katharine Hepburn. Technicolor. Released by Columbia. 112 minutes.

IN COLD BLOOD

I think it was Irving Berlin who informed us: "after you get what you want, you don't want it". In expressing any reservations about **In Cold Blood,** one has to admit some truth to this statement. For in this carefully made and sober film, we do find several points of approach which critics have been asking for, for years. Here is a study of criminals which doesn't (much) glamorise its subject. Here too is a plea against legal killing which shows its condemned men as quilty and not aggressively repentent. Yet Richard Brooks' movie leaves an obstinate sense that there's something wrong with it. Excellent in several ways — in acting, in atmosphere — it is not so much unsatisfactory as unsatisfying.

Probably the root cause lies in the "non-fiction novel", at least when turned into a "non-fiction" fiction film. The shock values of **In Cold Blood** remain puzzling, rather than purging. Everybody feels they *need* to understand why two American boys slaughtered an entire American family. But who can?

A current liberal thought holds

that no people, in themselves, are bad but people sometimes do bad things. This, I'm afraid, just isn't true — but, true or false, the film neither stresses nor rebuts it. A line in the script suggests that two personalities had combined to do the murders, making one new personality between them. Plausible, but not much help; virtually every human enterprise results from a similar merging. What else is troublesome? Well, I find the categorical visualising of one boy's neurosis becomes a crucial case of over-emphasis. Could we have invoked the father-complex ourselves, we might have *shared* it, but not this way. And why place the murder scene in late flashback, rather than in a natural time sequence like everything else? You can't empathise (through the body of the film) with guilt, when you're not sure who's guilty, and of what.

See the film. It will make you think, if not feel. And admire Conrad Hall's superb photography. (He also did the good-looking *Cool Hand Luke*). This is actually a major movie in black and white, and very welcome. Technically, though, I imagine it's the "Print by Technicolor" which gives the weird and impressive dense contrasts effect.

Clive Denton

Columbia release of a Richard Brooks Production. Written and directed by Brooks, from the novel by Truman Capote. With Robert Blake and Scott Wilson

THE BATTLE OF ALGIERS—

ELVIRA MADIGAN

Is there anything new to be said about artistic truth and its bearing on reality? The documentary film has for long been a touchstone. Whatever is, in the documentary, is right. Physical reality is to be continually redeemed.

We were surely naive. There was a catch in the formula all along. The "creative dramatization of actuality" (Rotha) has as much undistributed middle as any director could wish for; and middles, as well as both ends, is what a director distributes when he is in the business of dramatic creation. Selection is all. The door is open to art, artifice, whimsy or, it should be said, to didacticism.

Gillo Pontecorvo's recreation of that other undeclared war which ended in March of 1962 with the victory of the Algerian FLN, announces in a preface that not a single foot of newsreel has been used. This in itself requires a quick readjustment of some 30 years of documentary theory. In fact, at this point, one is cheerfully prepared to expect the worst.

What happens, however, is the best. Pontecorvo must have been doing something right: his film remains unshown in France, and at Venice 1966 the French delegation objected in a most strenuous fashion. The film got its Golden Lion all the same.

The citizens of Algiers who make up Pontecorvo's revolutionary *corps de ballet* relive the days of terror to such effect that one is free to admire the audacity of the filmmaker while forgetting the artifice. Pontecorvo *does* things with his crowd, a fruitful pairing of the European interest in crowd psychology with his Marxist theories of "spontaneity." For the Algerians, however, one senses almost an anniversary mood, more celebration than cerebration.

At times the screen almost bursts into flames. After a particularly horrible atrocity in which a group of off-duty police explodes a bomb among a

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honeycomb of sleeping families, the mangled children are carried out through the smoking rubble. And a wild cry of anguish begins, low at first, gradually taken up by all the inhabitants of the wounded ghetto until the soundtrack becomes a shrieking witness to all the humiliations of the wretched of the earth. And Marcello Gatti's camera pulls back and soars eloquently over all, searching as if for explanation in the sky above the casbah. If the task of the artist, as the old tag has it, is to translate his personal anguish into history, Pontecorvo has succeeded in just that. **The Battle of Algiers** is a film that should run for years.

What probably will run for years is **Elvira Madigan.** The critics have swooned. "Lush" has been restored to the lexicon, this time, curiously, as a term of approval.

The story of Elvira illustrates the historical oddity that life sometimes imitates art. For this real-life *fin-de-siècle* love affair ran its course when the New Romanticism was at fever pitch, in Scandinavia as elsewhere. *Lacrimae rerum* abounded. Easeful Death made the social register. The Swedish writer Hjalmar Soderberg, as late as 1906, provides a title-page motto for a play: "I believe in the lust of the flesh and the incurable loneliness of the soul." Dorian Gray would nod languid affirmation.

Elvira Madigan is a beautiful 18-year-old, a tightrope dancer, whose fate it is to fall in love with the young Count Sixten Sparre, a Lieutenant in the Royal Army of Sweden. It is high summer in the year 1889. Sixten deserts the army, his wife and children. The lovers elope to Denmark where presumably the King's writ doesn't run. Bo Widerberg's film is a lovingly-drawn account of their star-crossed idyll. For by and by the cold winds blow, there is no money, they are reduced to eating wild berries. On their last picnic together, Sixten brings his revolver to the greenwood, for they have already talked of a suicide pact. They embrace. He puts the gun to her ear. But courage fails. She rises, briefly to pursue a white butterfly, recreating the early days of their love. Sixten shoots her, her hands outstretched to the butterfly, held in a stopped frame. He shoots himself. The film stops.

There is no doubt that audiences are stunned. There is every doubt that this is what was intended. Elvira Madigan and Sixten Sparre occupy, by all accounts, a position in Scandinavian lore as familiar as Tristan and Isolde in ours. In Widerberg's original version, a short preface relates the story, *including the suicide*, to the audience; the director's talent was fully to be given over to the treatment of something approaching the dimension of *legend*. The American distributor, we gather, objected to what he no doubt referred to as a "give-away". The result is a cheap and gratuitous shattering of our sensibilities. Nor, it should be added, were the programme notes for the film's New York Festival showing any less coy. This is bad taste.

The end result of this kind of promiscuous esprit de corpse involves more than a lapse of taste. The unheralded double suicide sends one scurrying after the ghosts of dramatic motivation: couldn't the lovers have survived, couldn't Sixten have tried for a job, surely the penalties for desertion were mild for one so well-connected? Or was Elvira affected by a suicide-prone *Weltschmerz*?

The questions of course are absurd. But they are prompted by a search for motivation which would have had no relevance if Widerberg had given, or had been allowed to give, the theatrical, stylized treatment he had originally intended. In the mutilated version of **Elvira Madigan**, the historic as well as the artistic truth eludes us. Death-kit into death-kitsch. Physical reality remains irredeemable. An aesthetic crime has been committed.

Patrick MacFadden

THE BATTLE OF ALGIERS. Produced by Antonio Musu, directed by Gillo Pontecorvo. Photography, Marcello Gatti, screenplay by Franco Solinas; editor, Mario Serandrei and Mario Morra; music, Ennio Morricone, Gillo Pontecorvo. Italy/Algeria 1965; 125 mi. b/w. U.S. distributor: Irving Sochin for Rizzoli Films.

ELVIRA MADIGAN. Production, Janco Film / Europa Film; director and screenplay, Bo Widerberg; photography Jorgen Persson; editor, Bo Widerberg; music, Ulf Bjorlin, musical theme, Piano Concerto No. 21 by Mozart, played by Geza Anda. Starring Pia Degermark and Thommy Berggren. Sweden 1967. 90 mi. Eastmancolour. U.S. distributor, Cinema V Distributing Inc.

CREDITS

Brian Damude is a young Toronto writer.

William Dean is working towards a doctorate in Early English Drama at the University of Toronto, where he also teaches.

William K. Everson is film curator of New York's School of Visual Arts and an instructor in film history and technique there. His books include "The Western", "The American Movie", and "The Bad Guys". The present article is abridged from his most recent book, "The Films of Laurel & Hardy" (Citadel Press, 222 Park Avenue South, New York 10003), and is reprinted by permission.

Glen Hunter, by day respected Toronto librarian, by night underground film star for that city's Sedore Studios, is an unregenerate Florence Bates fan.

Patrick MacFadden, Take One Associate Editor, has surmounted obstacles raised by a powerful few and is continuing his graduate studies at Columbia University.

Mary Omatsu is a 19-year-old filmmaker and University of Toronto student. She is also president of the Centennial Film Board.

Gene D. Phillips, an associate of Chicago's National Center for Film Study, is currently at Fordham University. He has published widely in the international cinema press.

Juan Rodriguez is a young Montreal writer-publisher.

Jay Sayer spent fifteen years in the American theatre and cinema. He has been actor, writer and director for the major Hollywood film and tv studios, and has been under contract to (among others) David Susskind, Jerry Lewis, Sammy Davis Jr., and Betty Hutton. He is currently teaching in the English Department of the University of Western Ontario. The present interview appeared first in *20 Cents Magazine* (304 Oxford Street, London, Ontario), with questions and original editing by Victor Hoar.

Catherine Sugy, author of "Black Men or Good Niggers; Race in the new movies" in the last issue of Take One, is with the African History Department of Columbia University.

OOPS!

Through an error on our part, David J. Powell, author of "Television as a Sensory Experience" in the last issue of **Take One,** was unfortunately listed as Anthony Powell in the Credits department. — **Ed.**

BOOKS

Bergman, Ingmar; **A Film Trilogy**. Published by Calder and Boyars, London (General Publishing in Canada). 143 pp. $8.00 in Canada.

The translated film screenplays of **Through a Glass Darkly**, **Winter Light**, and **The Silence.**

Prédal, René; **Jeune Cinéma Canadien**. Published by SERDOC, 28, rue Villeroy, Lyon 3, France. 140 pp. $1.40 (U.S.) and $1.95 (Canada).

An exhaustive little handbook, Mr. Prédal's paperback devotes the first several pages to a history of the film in Canada, then turns to Bio-Filmographies of the country's (English as well as French) filmmakers. A useful bibliography completes the book.

Halliwell, Leslie; **The Filmgoer's Companion**. Published by MacGibbon and Kee (Ambassador Books in Canada). 847 pp. $12.75 in Canada. Second Edition, 1967.

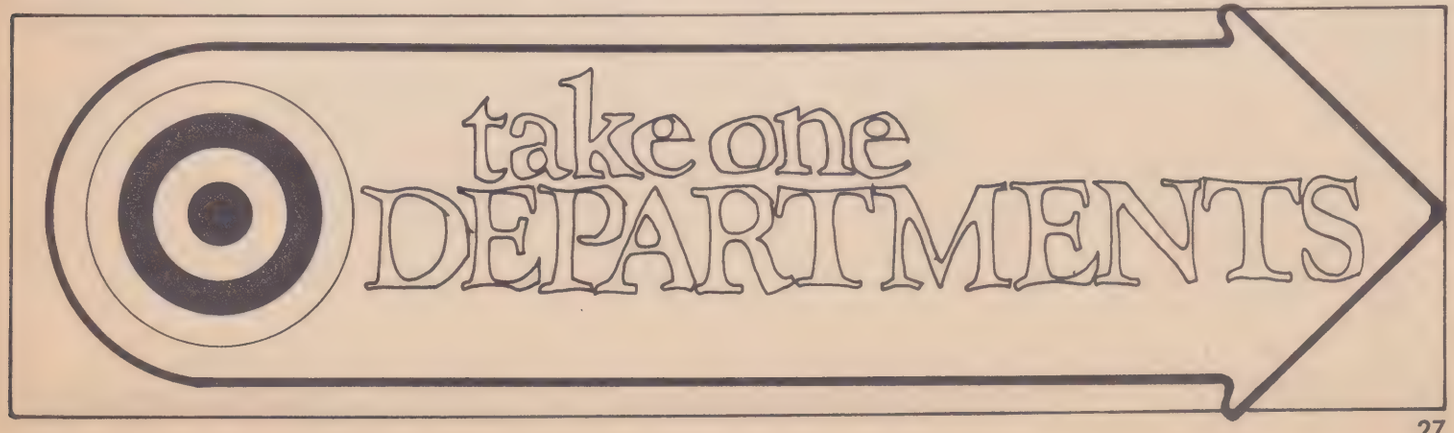
Less than two years after its initial publication **The Filmgoer's Companion** now appears not only in a revised but considerably enlarged (from 469 to 847 pages) edition. Not only have over 2,000 new entries been added but 3,000 existing ones have been expanded. The arrangement is in one alphabet and covers actors, directors, writers, producers, musicians, photographers, technical terms, notes on selected films, and brief notes on production companies and national histories. As before Halliwell is surprisingly up to date. Interspersed throughout are fascinating "subject" notes, some intentionally wry as in the entry for "Bathtubs" in films, most fairly serious (a lengthy note on title changes), though a few are rather desultory.

Much as one admired and endlessly consulted the earlier edition, certain reservations are inevitable. Most entries for individuals offer dates, a brief identification and a selective list of films (there are no illustrations), but in almost no case are all credits given. This can be infuriating as it's usually the obscure credits one needs to discover. Though no better in this respect, Peter Graham's much more modest **A Dictionary of the Cinema** has the advantage of offering an index of film titles referring back to individual entries. Unless a film is one of Halliwell's choices for a note (and there are some strange choices) you're lost if you know nothing except its title. Even here Halliwell isn't always consistent. Under Laurel and Hardy, **Sons of the Desert** (1933) has its British release title **Fraternally Yours** noted, but the specific note on this film is under the latter title with no cross reference from the original. Actually, there is some cross-referencing, but it's very meagre.

Inevitable (it seems these days) typo and proof-reading errors aside, Clive Denton has pointed out some howlers in the first edition, most of which are now corrected, though Johnny Dankworth scored **Darling**, not Ron Grainer, and there are four versions of **Seven Keys to Baldpate** not three.

Enough quibbling. There's nothing quite like **The Filmgoer's Companion** in English in one accessible volume, and compared to several similar French works and the notoriously inaccurate Italian **Filmlexicon** in seven expensive volumes, Halliwell is a model of accuracy. If you have the earlier edition, donate it to a deserving friend, and get this one.

Glen Hunter



NEW YORK LETTER

by Bob Cowan

SOUL TRIP No 9
by Mike Zuckerman

Mike Zuckerman's first 16mm film is a poetic tribute to the "pot" experience. It begins with a group smoking in a circle, and gradually evolves into fragmented images overlayed by the color-light constructions of Glen Ralston. The mood is melancholy as it drifts from the laughing face of a young girl to the almost mock-romantic interlude between George Kuchar and Rosalie May. Semi-nude beautiful girls form floral-like patterns over the reclining hero as gigantic eyes and lips are superimposed on clusters of moving figures. The opening tracts recreate in sound the hypnotic "buzz" of the "pot" experience. Water flows over stained glass windows and time is frozen as the lovers move together in slow stop-action. Donna Kerness dances and her legs drift away from the rest of her body. The face of Rosalie drifts through space followed by other Rosalie faces moving like detached balloons in the sky. A truly "high" film and yet filled with a sense of something remembered, something lost.

"***" by Andy Warhol**

Most of Warhol's films take place in exactly the same length of time it takes to shoot them. In his new film when he becomes impatient with natural time he interupts the scene with a flurry of fast flickering cuts to pass by and beyond the natural time lapses before settling down again. The overlapping projection of reels (rather than double exposure printing) produces a rare brilliance of color and light. The same freak people that appear in **Chelsea Girls** appear in "*****". They spout the same kind of pretentious small talk but they are presented only as images in an all over tapestry of form and color. One particular sequence has a young man in profile smoking and talking. Behind him in a muted sequence of color changes another man tries to undress a beautiful girl. The counterpoint of coolness and passion provokes an even more erotic response. The lyrical nostalgic sections on the beach melt and dissolve into each other in rich shifts of color and movement. Figures, sun, sky, and gestures, reposed faces blend into a perfect harmony of memory moods that evokes our own private experiences and feelings rather than leaving us with the feeling we are only observing someone elses. The version released is two hours long. The original ran twenty-five hours and was shown this way only once.

SELF OBLITERATION
by Jud Yalkut

A film with a sense of the legendary, of ritual and myth. Round dots painted on natural forms by Yayoi Kusama. Painted dots on a horse, on paper in water, on water itself . . . the paint drifting away, vein-like on the pond. More and more white dots accumulating until entire cities are smothered, crowds are swallowed by a storm of dots. Vegetables to flesh, figures of light dissolving. The gentle prologue moving towards an orgiastic frenzy of painted nude bodies dissolving in reflected images overlapping and bouncing in on themselves. A Dante's inferno of color, nude erotic forms, paint and confusion. The film builds to this climax with the expectation that another plateau is going to be attained. Unfortunately, here the film ends, the expectation left unresolved. Aside from this, the film remains an exhilarating experience.

FRAGMENTS by Mike Kuchar

"A visual drift into the realm of electric colors, sensual curves and dark grasslands, where one is lost with himself." This quote is by Mike Kuchar concerning **Fragments. Fragments** is a new departure from the usual Kuchar film. It is seen in painterly terms, the ideas abstracted into a stream-of-consciousness narrative form. The tactile sense of flesh is beautifully rendered with light and color. It is the most mature and poetic of Mike's films and points the way to new directions for him.

TORONTO LETTER

Few Torontonians have heard of the Memory Lane Film Club or the Little Queen Victoria Cinema, yet a growing number of the city's silent film buffs are beginning to get the word. The centre of attraction is Reg W. Hartt, an enterprising young man whose childhood interest in cinema has caused him to amass one of Canada's largest private collections of classic silent films. Over the last few years he has obtained thirty-five 8mm prints of the finest pre-sound films, spending anywhere from $60 to $160 per copy. At first his collection was just a hobby, but recently he began renting his films to "afficionados" and showing them on a regular basis at the Memory Lane Film Club (602A Markham St.) and at the Little Cinema (801 Yonge St.).

Although his films are 8mm, the images on the screen are good and his presentations usually draw twenty to thirty people, sometimes more, which at $1.00 admittance and two or three showings a week keep him moderately well fed and sheltered.

"This is all I do," says Mr. Hartt. "When I'm not showing films, which is a lot of the time, I work on sound tracks for them, putting music and effects on a tape which I play on a tape recorder along with the film. And then I write a little once in a while, for myself."

Years ago in Sault Ste. Marie, Reg bought his first print, **The Phantom of the Opera,** which he had heard and read a lot about but felt he would never get to see in his uncinema-minded home town. Now, several thousand dollars later, he has made a great many contacts and sources for old films and is still having prints made for his collection.

"8mm prints are ideal for me," he says, "because they are so relatively inexpensive to purchase and yet the quality of the films do not really suffer. After all, no sound is needed except the music from the tape recorder, and in a theatre the picture can be projected much larger and clearer than the average home-movie bug would believe."

Brian Damude

IN THE WORKS

Jean-Pierre Lefebvre — **Mon Amie Pierrette** — 90 minutes, drama using non professional actors. Completed, pending NFB approval.

Jean-Pierre Lefebvre — **Mon Oeil** — Black and white, 3 hrs. 16mm. A film about violence as part of our culture. Shooting has been interrupted because of lack of funds to cover technical expenses.

Claude Fournier — **Machine Gun Molly** — A drama based on the career of Montreal's famous bank robberess. Script by Jean-Pierre Lefebvre. A film in colour starring Dominique Michele. Shooting will begin in June. Members of the production team have received anonymous telephone threats.

Jacques Leduc — **Nominingue** — Black and white, 75 minutes. Starring Denys Arcand and Francoise Sullivan. NFB.

Leonard Forest — **Les Acadiens de la Dispersion** — Black and white documentary, 16mm, 2 hours. NFB for television. A documentary that will have no commentary, it is the history of the Acadian people as told by themselves. Contemporary Acadians give a portrait of their past and present. The film probes their way of life and their unique problems. Nearing completion.

Patricia Watson — **The Admittance** (working title) — Black and white, one hour. Produced by the NFB for TV. A film about the relationship between a mother and two grown daughters. Presently in the editing stage.

Arthur Lamothe — **Poussière sur la Ville** (Dust on the City) — 90 minutes. Drama produced by the NFB starring Michele Rossignol and Guy Sanche. Nearing completion.

Marc Beaudet and *Louis Portugais* — A one hour documentary in 16mm colour on the activities of CUSO in South America. CUSO is an organization connected with Canadian universities which is the nearest equivalent we have of the Peace Corps. Through use of parallel editing, the film will attempt to show the sort of problems the Canadian volonteers are up against in countries where the gap between the wealthy and the poor is so extreme. Shooting has just commenced on this film.

The English section of the NFB is working on a large project under the general heading "The Callenge for Change". Films produced as part of this project are described as "more than films" but rather positive forces for change. The films being produced and to be produced will concern themselves with general social issues currently of concern in Canada. Two films, currently in production as part of this program are: **The Generation Gap**, a film by Mort **(No reason to Stay)** Ransen presently in the late editing stage; and **The Calibogey Fiddler,** a one hour dramatic film by Peter Pierson. More information will be available on this series next issue.

Man with a Mission produced by Dale Barnes. A one-hour CBC documentary about the life of Dr. McClure who spent 43 years in a missionary hospital in India. David Bassett recounts his life giving his experiences in India, China and Egypt. The program has just been completed.

Legend by Dale Barnes. An hour-long pilot for a proposed television series on the lives of the saints to "explore the unexplainable", presently in production.

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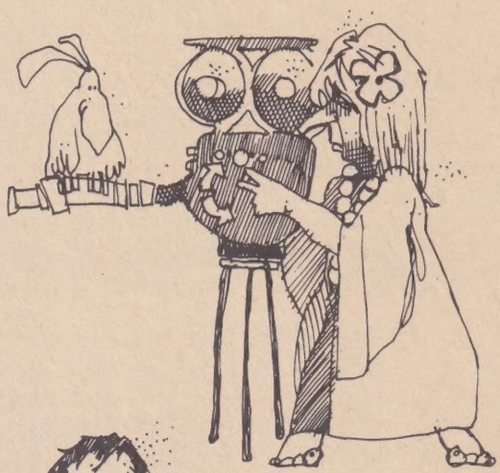
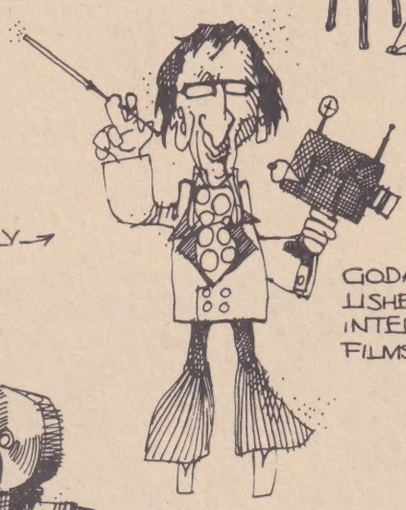
film scenarios

DAVE RELICK DOES ESKIMOS FOR THE N.F.B., THE C.B.C., CANADA COUNCIL & ED MIRVISH. DAVE ALSO DOES THE OCCASIONAL DOCUMENTARY FILM.



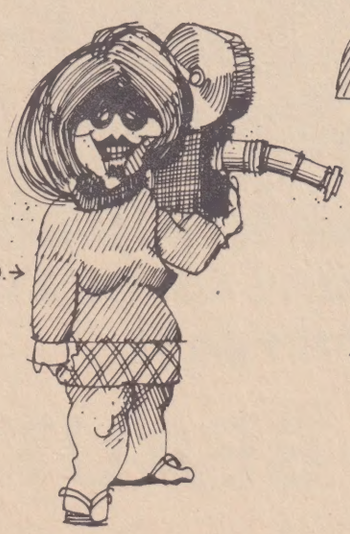
"SPEEDSTER" FREAK, YOU'LL REMEMBER, USED TO PLAY BASS GUITAR FOR "PENNY THOUGHTS" UNTIL PENNY RAN OFF WITH the KAZOO PLAYER FROM "THE MUMP." →

SPEEDSTER IS INTO PSYCHEDELIC FILMS.



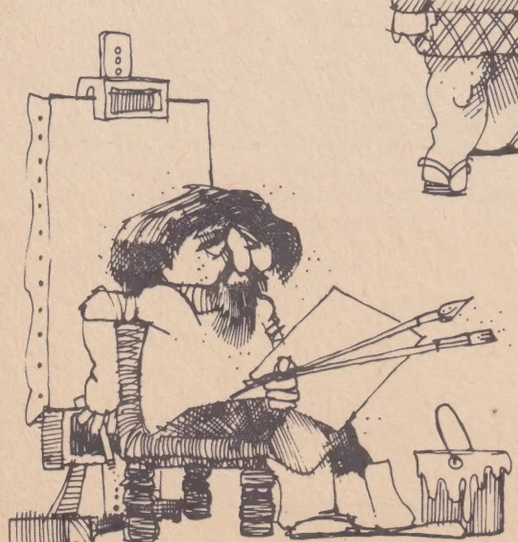
ANDRÉ LA JUPE, BORN IN RIMOUSKI, EMIGRATED TO FRANCE IN 1962. BY AN EXTREME BIT OF LUCK, PLAYED A BIT PART AS A BED-POST IN AN EARLY→

GODARD FILM. RETURNED, AN ESTABLISHED FOLK HERO, TO THE MONTREAL INTELLECTUAL GHETTO. NOW DOES TRAVEL FILMS FOR LABATT "50."



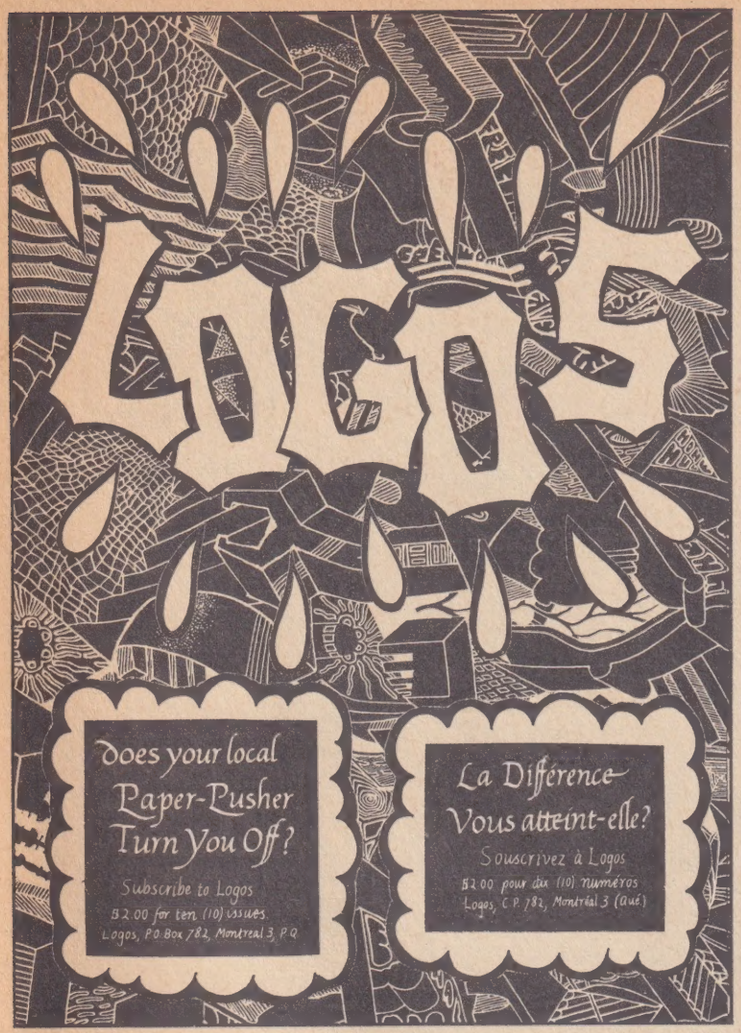
SANDRA GRUBOWSKI, BORN & BRED IN THE PILOT TAVERN, TORONTO.→

IT IS RUMORED THAT SANDRA WAS THE ONLY FIRST YEAR STUDENT AT THE ONTARIO COLLEGE of ART TO DO GRAHAM COUGHTRY AND THE ARTISTS JAZZ BAND, TWICE. SANDRA LIVES WITH SPEEDSTER & DOES SEX FILMS.



....AND HERE'S CARL FETTISH. CARL STILL PAINTS. DAVE, SPEEDSTER, ANDRÉ & SANDRA ALL THINK THAT CARL IS PRETTY QUAINT.

©AISLIN 1968.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Spring

At the annual meeting held at the Windsor Hotel, Montreal on February 23rd the following officers were elected for the calendar year of 1968:

President:
Wally Gentleman, S.P.E.A.C., Montreal

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Bob Baylis, N.F.B., Montreal

Assistant Sec-Treasurer:
Malca Gillson, N.F.B., Montreal

Vice-Presidents:
Allan King, Allan King Associates, Toronto
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Arthur Hammond, N.F.B., Montreal
Peter Jones, N.F.B., Vancouver
Werner Aellen, N.F.B., Montreal
Mike McKennirey, N.F.B., Montreal

The Society of Film Makers will, during the year, initiate a series of seminars with notable film makers from Canada and abroad discussing related aspects of film making. The intention of these seminars is to develop an intensive exchange of ideas of mutual interest to film makers.

These seminars will be recorded in order to disseminate pertinent information and to provide to members across the country a basis for opinions and discussions on matters of vital interest to the profession.

We invite non-members interested in these seminars to obtain further detailed information from our secretary.

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